THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

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INITIATES *are in the position, as regards spiritual knowledge, that the regularly taught professor of a great university is in, as regards literary knowledge, and anyone can appreciate the superior claims of instruction which might be received from him, as compared with the crude and imperfect instruction which might be offered by the merely self-taught man. The initiate's speculations, in fact, are not spun at all; they are laid out before him by the accumulated wisdom of ages, and he has merely followed, verified and assimilated them.* —H.P.B.

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A U M

You yourself must put forth exertion; for the Buddhas are but signposts.
—DHAMMAPADA

THEOSOPHY

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A CENTURY OF PROGRESS

THE interval in the radius of human consciousness which divides the middle years of the nineteenth century from the corresponding point in the twentieth century is so great, forming an abyss so wide, that it often seems necessary to imagine some deeply occult, psychic or psycho-physical transformation to account for the change. The eleventh discourse of *The Bhagavad-Gita* tells of Arjuna's "vision of the divine form as including all forms," and of the fear, almost horror, as well as psychic catharsis which this awful spectacle produced in him. A comparison of the present circumstances and mood of the world with that of a century ago invites a wondering if the modern world has not been afforded some darkened glimpse of the inner side of things, some shadowed perspective which, if not understood, has at least imparted the thrill of horror and terrible uncertainty to the men of our time.

If our life, as the Secret Doctrine declares, is "a series of progressive awakenings," then every stage of progress upward in the cycle of evolution must be illumined by the light of a new vision or insight into the nature of things. As surely as the unborn child must one day leave the tender security of the mother's body, and learn to adjust itself to the conditions of perception and experience in the outside world, so also must the ego be periodically born into some *terra incognita* of psychic and manasic adventure, there to begin a new term of growth—of adjustment, reorientation, and creative action. And as our lives, in this age of *Kali Yuga,* are filled with the disasters of precocious knowledge and experience, into which the

Karma of past unwisdom and unregulated ambition thrusts us, it seems virtually inevitable that every effort on the part of higher beings to bring their knowledge within our grasp will also set aflame the tinder of human weakness and awaken tendencies which, under ideal conditions, would remain unstirred until a time of greater moral equilibrium.

What might have been the "vision" that was disclosed? If we but knew! If we could grasp the recondite workings of the cycles of nature—of Great Nature, which includes the mysteries of unfolding consciousness, the obscure relationships between "planetary" evolution and the karmic cycles of race and nation—we should be wise indeed. But our mechanized "sky-walkers" are no yogis of compassion. We traverse the firmament, it is true, but as anxious and unwilling passengers who move in half-consciously ruthless invasion of the upper air. Our watch towers are not for keeping alight the flame of aspiration, but warders against the "guided missiles" of a profaned physical occultism. Like the haunted ancient mariner of Coleridge, we tread the shadow of our foe, and forward bend our heads.

But during this same century of transition were other things made known:

> The exact extent, depth, breadth, and length of the mysteries of Nature are to be found only in Eastern esoteric sciences. So vast and so profound are these that hardly a few, a very few of the highest Initiates—those *whose very existence is known but to a small number of Adepts*—are capable of assimilating the knowledge. Yet it is all there, and one by one facts and processes in Nature's workshops are permitted to find their way into the exact Sciences, while mysterious help is given to rare individuals in unravelling its arcana. It is at the close of great Cycles, in connection with racial development, that such events generally take place. We are at the very close of the cycle of 5,000 years of the present Aryan Kaliyuga; and between this time and 1897 there will be a large rent made in the Veil of Nature, and materialistic science will receive a death-blow. (*S.D.* I, 611-12.)

Knowlege is power, and we have witnessed what men can and will do with the forces of nature. Fortunately, an inner process of discovery is working its magic as inevitably as the terrors produced in the world of visible events. Conceivably, the heightened pace of destruction but meets the requirements of inexorable karmic Law,

clearing away the debris of millenniums of selfishness and ignorance, and making ready the scene for a new act in the drama of spiritual awakening.

The relationship between the Theosophical Movement and the chaotic course of world history can only be described as contrapuntal. In a Golden Age, perhaps, the two themes would be one: the way of the Brothers and the way of the world would not be two separate ways, one marked by lonely watching and waiting, the other by the random charges of delusive striving, but they would be united by the universally recognized symbols of a common purpose. Civilization would then be understood as the name for the working together of all manner of men, of all degrees of knowledge and understanding, with the institutions of society conscious replicas of the timeless foci of initiation. But this is not the Golden Age. It is an age in which the hands and minds of men are set against themselves—in which their highest motives often seem to lead to self-betrayal and self-destruction—in which Whirl is King, and the guides, philosophers, and friends of the human race are mocked as aliens. Thus, in Kali Yuga, the secret path is doubly secret, although, of a truth, it is doubly powerful for good, when once undertaken.

During Kali Yuga, the power of the truth can work only as a leaven, as a catalyst. It operates according to the laws of what has been called "occult chemistry"—in that region of nature which men speak of as their "feelings" and the "mind." Concerning this process, one of the founders of the Theosophical Movement has written in the following terms:

> Meanwhile the world of real occultists smile silently, and go on with the laborious process of sifting out the living germs from the masses of men. For occultists must be found and fostered and prepared for coming ages when power will be needed and pretension will go for nothing.

In those "coming ages," the work of the Theosophical Movement and the efforts of the striving, struggling, suffering world will once more be united in one great current of human growth. This, for the practical purposes of the workaday world, is the "Day be with Us" of archaic tradition; it is the "Promised Land" of religious allegory, and the time of the rebirth of the gods, referred to in myths of antiquity. It will be marked, we are told, by the return of "long-gone Gnanis," when the days of men will be filled with natural

gladness. The wisdom of the sage will then not be distinguishable from the innocence of the child, save by the fact that each has assimilated and become the other, and the tired eyes and heavy hearts of men will be but a forgotten memory.

It is for this we work. From this dream of progress, alive and real even in the trough of historical transition, we gain the ichor of inspiration, for from the actuality which is the real in every dream comes that vision which makes living connection between present and future, dispels the illusion of failure, and melts the forbidding threat of obstacles not yet overcome.

TRIALS OF THE SOUL

Apollo kept the flocks of Admetus, said the poets. Every man is a divinity in disguise, a god playing the fool. It seems as if heaven had sent its insane angels into our world as to an asylum, and here they will break out into their native music and utter at intervals the words they have heard in heaven; then the mad fit returns, and they mope and wallow like dogs. When the gods come among men they are not known. Jesus was not; Socrates and Shakespeare were not. Antaeus was suffocated by the grip of Hercules, but every time he touched his mother earth, his strength was renewed. Man is the broken giant, and in all his weakness, both his body and his mind are invigorated by habits of conversation with nature. The power of music, the power of poetry to unfix, and as it were, clap wings to all solid nature, interprets the riddle of Orpheus, which was to his childhood an idle tale. The philosophical perception of identity through endless mutations of form, makes him know the Proteus. What else am I who laughed or wept yesterday, who slept last night like a corpse, and this morning stood and ran? And what see I on any side but the transmigrations of Proteus? I can symbolize my thought by using the name of any creature, of any fact, because every creature is man, agent or patient. Tantalus is but a name for you and me. Tantalus means the impossibility of drinking the waters of thought which are always gleaming and waving within sight of the soul.

—EMERSON

KERNELS OF WISDOM

"Men take less care of their conscience than their reputation."

IN an age of spiritual darkness, such as the present *Kali Yuga* period, the attention of most men's minds is centered almost entirely upon the material plane, with the result that introspection and efforts toward mental and psychic control are practically nonexistent. The pressures of business and social life are so demanding that the whole force of our being is absorbed in them. Where is the man, for example, who sets aside a definite period each morning to consider the great purposes of life, and the possible bearing of that day's events upon them? Where is the person who is watchful for an opportunity, at some time during the course of the day, of gaining a few spare moments for quiet reflection? How many individuals, before retiring at night, follow the practice of viewing the day's activities with impartiality, of evaluating things said and done, of subduing all biases of mind and heart? For the most part, we are completely taken up with *things,* exclusively concerned with the affairs of the personality, with the result that at the end of the day little of real spiritual advance has been achieved.

Some people say that the full expression of the personality is essential to happiness, that it is not good to concern oneself too seriously with the sins and faults of our common human nature. Others argue that self-analysis and introspection are morbid activities, leading only to despondency, that the freer one can remain from such considerations the better off he will be. Furthermore, it is asked, what is wrong with a stimulating evening at a night club or bar? What possible harm can come from the enjoyment of an entertaining program at home on television or radio? How else is one to share in the manifold blessings of his age, and take full advantage of the boons of science, which mark our superiority over peoples in other lands, who possess them not?

Theosophy has no argument with the idea that the active life is the normal one, or that many—perhaps all—scientific achievements possess genuine possibilities for good. It only states that none of

these external things in themselves constitute progress; that real progress, in the only permanent sense of the word, is something which relates to the heart and soul of man, to his dealings with fellow men in daily life, to the use that he makes of anything, his time included. Furthermore, it holds that many of our social customs, besides being a waste of time, are definitely injurious to the human system, and a bar to progress. Is it not admitted by leading physicians that the use of alcohol is pernicious in its effects upon the cells of the brain, stunting the development of the better portion of the mind? Do not many teachers and educators agree that present programs of entertainment on television and radio, in excess, can almost totally inhibit the creative faculties, inducing a sponge-like passivity in the listeners? Theosophy holds that man is a soul, and not a mere body—that he possesses within himself the undeveloped germs of adeptship, but that these can never be cultivated so long as they are ignored, or so long as one wastes his energies upon mere frivolity. The progressive mind should lend a portion of its genius to nobler themes, should refresh itself each day in the life-giving waters of thoughtful contemplation.

The reason, perhaps, why men take less care of their conscience than their reputation is because they live as persons instead of as souls. For what, after all, is reputation? Is it not but the outer garment of the personality—that fragmentary portion of one's character which lies within the purview of others? Based almost entirely upon appearances, its popularity fluctuates from day to day, as the tides of public opinion go up and down.

Reputation is the value other men place upon our lives, while conscience is the honesty of self-evaluation. According to Theosophical philosophy, conscience is the voice of one's inner god, the distilled essence of all past experiences. It is the guiding star of the soul, as it shines through the billowy clouds of idea and emotion and impresses its light upon the consciousness *as morality*. It always prompts a person to do right, as he understands right to be, and though conscience may not be always infallible, it at least keeps the man who follows it true to himself. "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

How many men, today, however, care as much for inner sanctity as for outer fame? It takes strong souls to withstand the temptations of personal notoriety, and to follow truth and honor wherever they

may lead, irrespective of what scoffers may say or do. Almost without exception, the ideal of twentieth-century aspiration is personal fame and glory, little consideration being given to the means by which it is achieved. In days of old, however, it was different. In the brighter periods of our history, a man would die rather than tell a lie, would go to prison for the sake of conscience, would prefer exile to even the most vaunted reputation, if gained at the expense of others, or dishonestly.

If men would give as much thought to protecting the reputations of others as they do to guarding their own, there would be less need for martyrdom in the world. Is it not a fact that many of the world's greatest benefactors have had their good names ruined by the jealousies and animosities of those they came to help? Consider the lives of Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno, Mesmer, and H. P. Blavatsky. All alike are looked upon as imposters, even though they conferred only benefits upon their race. One of the chief purposes of H.P.B.'s mission was to restore the good names of her predecessors, to remove the mud hurled by popular prejudice upon the honor of noble men. In the preface to her first book, *Isis Unveiled,* she said: "It calls for a restitution of borrowed robes, and the vindication of calumniated but glorious reputations."

The care of the soul, of which conscience is a part, should be an object of daily concern for every human being. Spiritual teachers, in all ages, declare the pre-eminent value of virtue and knowledge over the temporary blessings of material acquirement. They present the laws and principles of life which will enable man to know for himself, to gain control over his whole acquired nature, so that the divine potentialities of his inner self may fructify and grow. Just as the body has its organs and faculties of perception which must be used and developed for perfect health, so there is an anatomy of the inner man which requires daily attention. Can there be physical well-being for the person who is irregular in eating and sleeping, who takes no heed of the recognized rules of physiology? Can there be mental vigor and intelligence without a certain amount of serious thought and study? How, then, can one expect contentment of heart and soul, or to possess power to bear the burdens allotted him by Karma, without inner strength and equipoise, which depend first and foremost upon a clear conscience?

Leaders of thought are awakening, somewhat belatedly, to the fact that a change for the better in our civilization can come only through individuals, from within the heart and soul of man himself. The first need is for the pioneering spirit of brave souls who recognize intuitively that the foundations of the new race must be laid upon the base-rock of human integrity, and that the greatest service any man can render is to become a moral force for good, to establish in himself a code of action based on law, and not on greed, prejudice or retaliation. The patriot of this new order will be the man or woman who dares to be honest and altruistic even in the face of dishonesty and selfishness, who will be kind when others are cruel, who trusts even at the risk of being betrayed. Who knows the power of a life so lived? Who can measure the results for good of a single individual who takes real pride in his work, who would forfeit a day of his pay rather than put out shoddy and indifferent products? The spirit of apathy and lack of conscientiousness which gnaws at the moral fibre of the race can be combatted only by men of moral courage, who see the better way and take it.

Yet, it is not always easy to discriminate between the voice of conscience and the subtle lure of self-interest or emotionalism. Some have been known to claim guidance from the spirit of God above, when by every known standard of decency, the nature of their acts belied this pretension. Is it not true that the tortures of the Spanish Inquisition were inspired by the holy office of the Christian Church? Is it not a fact that the Crusades and other *holy wars* have been waged under the banner of religious belief and conviction? Equally inconsistent may be those who profess the noble sentiment of Universal Brotherhood, yet in their dealings in the privacy of home or business can be un-cooperative and mean, unmindful of the "voice in the wilderness." The mark of the conscientious man is not to be looked for in boastful claims to brotherly love, but in the quality of behavior in the homely walks of daily life.

If, in the silent councils of the heart, a man feels himself at peace with his own conscience, and therefore with all living things and beings, he will require no outside security. If he can look within himself, humbly seeking to purify his motives in all he says and does, then, even though his wisdom be not perfect, he need have no fear of public opinion. If he can find joy and contentment in the

simple things of life—in the beauty of a sunset, the warmth of sweet companionship, or the inspiration of a great idea—he will feel less and less inclined to squander his energies upon *things.*

Might it be that the fear and suspicion we feel toward other people and nations is due to an inner perception of our own untrustworthiness and lack of good will? Might it be that our feverish search for external amusement is due to unwillingness to face our own conscience? The battle for peace of mind and heart must be fought and won within the man himself, the sages say. Until this is done, no external solace will suffice. Until the principles of man's own nature have been brought under control, it will be futile to win victories over others, or to build up for one's self a glittery soulless tower of worldly reputation.

In *Light on the Path,* the voice of conscience is referred to as the Warrior within, whom the disciple is admonished to seek out, listen to, obey—else in the press of events, the magic of His presence may be overlooked.

> Take his orders for battle and obey them. . . .
>
> Unconcerned in the battle save to do his bidding, having no longer any care as to the result of the battle, for one thing only is important, that the warrior shall win, and you know he is incapable of defeat—standing thus, cool and awakened, use the hearing you have acquired by pain and the destruction of pain.

But how is it possible to hear the sweet melody while the whole of one's attention is directed to the noise of the Great Illusion? How can the Warrior take command so long as we are ambitious and self-willed, so long as the bearing of our nature is in the direction of notoriety and fame? To be heard, the still small voice must be hearkened to with dispassionate ears, with mind uninfluenced by the turbulence of desire. But once the covenant has been established, and the personality subdued, then may one stand aside, heed the command of the Warrior, and fear no wrong.

It was said of Wm. Q. Judge that "He fears nothing, except his own conscience." Nothing on the outside can bring grief to the upright man, nor can anything external give happiness, contentment, peace. The fountain of everlasting joy is not to be found in the vacillating purgations of matter, but in the deep spiritual consciousness of man himself. And the nearer its precincts are approached, the simpler one's life will become. Instead of the multitude of cares

that harass the spirit of ordinary men, the devotee has but one concern—to do the bidding of his Higher Self. And though this inner guide, in the early stages of attention, may appear but as a whisper, a shadow, or a breath, the power of its substance will grow into the never-ceasing fire of devotion in our own hearts.

THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES

The hero is the man of self-achieved submission. But submission to what? That precisely is the riddle that today we have to ask ourselves and that it is everywhere the primary virtue and historic deed of the hero to have solved . . . Schism in the soul, schism in the body social, will not be resolved by any scheme of return to the good old days (archaism), or by programs guaranteed to render an ideal projected future (futurism), or even by the most realistic, hardhearted work to weld together again the deteriorating elements. Only birth can conquer death—the birth, not of the old thing again, but of something new. Within the soul, within the body social, there must be—if we are to experience long survival—continuous "recurrence of birth" (palingenesia) to nullify the unremitting recurrences of death. For it is by means of our own victories, if we are not regenerated, that the work of Nemesis is wrought: doom breaks from the shell of our very virtue. Peace then is a snare; war is a snare; change is a snare; permanence a snare. When our day is come for the victory of death, death closes in; there is nothing we can do, except be crucified—and resurrected; dismembered totally, and then reborn. . . . As we soon shall see, whether presented in the vast, almost oceanic images of the Orient, in the vigorous narratives of the Greeks, or in the majestic legends of the Bible, the adventure of the hero normally follows the pattern of the nuclear unit above described: a separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and a life-enhancing return.

—JOSEPH CAMPBELL *(The Hero With a Thousand Faces)*

NOTES ON THE KEY

"OUR AGE," wrote H. P. Blavatsky, "is pre-eminently unspiritual and matter of fact." This single sentence offers, we may think, explanation of why the orientation of so much of H.P.B.'s writing was "mystical"—she evidently both thought and wrote with the exceptions to this rule very much in mind. And, surely, an intuitive recognition of realms and powers beyond the senses is a prerequisite to valuation of religion and religions.

Those who were too "matter of fact"—who were unable to transcend even by a little the limitations of a purely rationalistic view, moreover—would have been unable to serve or be served by the aims and program of the T.S. While the *methods* of strict logic or "inductive reasoning" were also incorporated by implication in the study program of the Society, the first assumption of most working members was undeniably that a hidden or *esoteric* aspect of man and his relation to Religion must be probed.

We can hardly doubt H.P.B.'s acumen in prophesying in *Isis Unveiled* the continuing degeneration of religious sectarian power: "A few centuries more, and there will linger no sectarian beliefs in either of the great religions of humanity." This, we may assume, was but the inevitable working out of karmic law. Specific dogmas and sectarian prejudices can hold the mind of man stationary for only a limited period of time. However, the death of one set of dogmas in no sense assures an end, or even a lessening, of the dogmatic attitude. For this, too, is "karma"—the inevitable continuation of habits of mind. A useful account of this sort of "succession" of preconceptions is provided by Macneile Dixon in *The Human Situation:*

> The supreme attraction of Darwinism lay in its exclusion of special creation and the idea of purpose. That was its peculiar charm. For that reason it was exultantly received and proclaimed as the final truth. . . . It was agreed that the doctrine must be true, and there followed a sustained effort to prove it true. Never has there been greater zeal and industry displayed in search of corroborative evidence. We see it to-day in the search for fossil remains of early man or man's immediate predecessors, the interest in the human or sub-human types found in Java, Pekin, Piltdown, Heidelberg,

> Neanderthal and Rhodesia. Here you have a faith, which so seized upon the mind, such was the devotion it inspired, as to energise thought to find the grounds upon which it might be firmly established—a belief, that is to say, which preceded the evidence. And why? Because the thought that it might not be true was utterly hateful and intolerable. With the utmost frankness Huxley himself gives us the clue to the jubilation with which Darwinism was received, and espoused before it was demonstrated. The doctrine, he tells us, did men of science the immense service of freeing them from the dilemma, "Refuse to accept the Creation hypothesis, and what have you to put in its place?" Expressed succinctly, we may say, the theory was a God-send to the disbelievers in God.
>
> Let us be just, too, and bear in mind that there was no alternative within sight. Evolution theory must be true, because otherwise we should not know what to believe, a humiliating and monstrous situation. It was this or nothing, or rather it was this or a choice between God and blank amazement, a most disagreeable dilemma.

The extent to which the Western climate of opinion during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was inviting crude, oversimplified versions of materialism indicated how many were eager to embrace new dogmas to fill the yawning gap left by removal of the old. And in the process, the deep source of belief in a metaphysical world, in a God or gods, in visions and prophecies and an after-life, was denied by the worst denial of all—that is, made no longer "respectable."

Theosophy may speak to man in any one of numerous languages, once having taken, according to Wm. Q. Judge, even a political orientation during the revolutionary period of the eighteenth century. It seems evident that the cause of theosophic enlightenment was served by such apparently materialistic iconoclasts as Voltaire, La Mettrie and d'Holbach, when the pendulum of the race mind had, in swinging too far into religious superstition, required liberation. But the issuance of H.P.B.'s own works coincided with another and opposite arc of that pendulum. The age of irreligion, of cynicism toward mysticism, was already in strong motion. It is therefore worth-while to note that, instead of riding this popular wave and presenting theosophical ideas simply as hypothetical perspectives on religious study, as she might so easily and successfully have done, H.P.B. appealed *especially* to those who still felt that the deep mysteries of religion remained to be comprehended. While her mode of

discussion was for the most part "scientifically objective," the *subject matter* of her writing was super-physical. The knowledge that Theosophy, thus presented, would often come to be regarded as but another of many religions did not deter her in this emphasis; a *complete* Theosophy was the only hope for those who, having lost specific focus for their religious intuitions, were stranded between the Will to Believe in Spiritual Man, and all-denying materialism.

As students of theosophical history know, interest in Spiritualism was the peculiar but karmically natural direction of interest in "the mysteries" for many persons, and H.P.B. seems to have first spoken to and written for these inquirers. At the close of her life—which ended soon after the publication of the *Key*—the appeal for investigation of the *mysteries* remained a fundamental consideration in all her writing. She had seen the majority of the spiritualists desert their honest quest and investigation, creating instead a new phenomenalistic religion of their own; yet she apparently still felt a special duty to those who were concerned, under whatever name, with honestly probing the unknown. Her definition of Theosophy, which opens the first chapter of the *Key,* also confirms this view: "Divine wisdom such as that possessed by the Gods"—is, in the terms of a "matter of fact" age, a bizarre clause. But would not such intimations also speak sympathetically to those who needed to be able to keep, in the face of "luxurious materialism," a faith that *something* might lie behind their own mystical intuitions?

In the discussion of Ammonius Saccas, again we find the mystic element emerging, and as no minor theme. H.P.B.'s long footnote on page two is illustrative of her insistence in calling attention to something more than the "rationality" of eclectic study. The third division of Ammonius' work is described as follows:

> (3) *Theurgy,* or "divine work," or *producing a work of gods;* from *theoi,* "gods," and *ergein,* "to work." The term is very old, but, as it belongs to the vocabulary of the Mysteries, was not in popular use. It was a mystic belief—practically proven by initiated adepts and priests—that, by making oneself as pure as the incorporeal beings—*i.e.,* by returning to one's pristine purity of nature —man could move the gods to impart to him Divine mysteries, and even cause them to become occasionally visible, either subjectively or objectively. It was the transcendental aspect of what is now called Spiritualism.

This current in theosophical writing may, however, be approached from another direction, and given a fully "rational" explanation. Is it not apparent that if religious beliefs had been studied on face or literal value alone, in disregard of their theurgic and mystic elements, no conception of hidden truths of import *which men might now learn and know* could emerge? Comparative study of exoteric religion might conceivably bring about a better cultural brotherhood, yet the *deeps* of the various religions would be the only ground on which "the importance of such study" could be realized. (As to the intention of directing thought away from purely exoteric study, we might reflect on such things as the name "Lucifer," the title of such an article as H.P.B.'s "Esoteric Character of the Gospels," the page headings in *Isis* and *The Secret Doctrine,* picking at random "The Quest of the Psychometer" in *Isis* and "The Mysteries Among the Mayas" in *The Secret Doctrine.*)

The third sub-section of the *Key's* first chapter is headed, "The Wisdom Religion Esoteric in all Ages." Here, at the outset, the student is given the view that all the "mysteries" are based on realities, and that Theosophy itself is primarily an esoteric rather than an exoteric doctrine. In fact, the term "doctrine," itself, could easily have been dispensed with if the Society had confined itself to "matter of fact" rationalistic study of religious beliefs. Finally, in the second section of the *Key,* "Exoteric and Esoteric Theosophy," we notice the deliberate emphasis upon the "MYSTERIES"—even typographically. H.P.B.'s presentation continually stresses that what man now knew was, in Dowden's phrase, "a mere pin-point of demonstrable knowledge." And, even if the doctrines or tenets of esoteric theosophy be themselves regarded as the essence of all Religion, again the emphasis is upon the illimitable extent of the mysteries.

Man's continuing intuitions about the unknown are so deep that no single religious interpretation could possibly still their promptings. As H.P.B. wrote on the first page of the Preface to *Isis Unveiled,* "The human heart has not yet fully uttered itself," and no single presentation of comprehensive truth, be it in either religious or scientific guise, could ever satisfy the developing capacities for perception, unless built upon the twin facts of *illimitable* wonders and mysteries, and the avowal that "there are no unsolvable mysteries anywhere."

In summation, then, we find that a true synthesis between the *essential* in religion and science is represented, by implication, on nearly every page of the *Key*. H.P.B.'s scope is the *all* of religion—the significance of multitudinous creeds and beliefs, as evaluated by the principles of a coherent body of knowledge, "the accumulated wisdom of the ages." H.P.B. brought, she said, without apology or equivocation, the tenets of this wisdom religion, for *study,* not acceptance. The T.S. invited each one to proceed, if he wished, according to the inductive processes of reason so beloved in that rationalistic age—checking and verifying the existence of the Gupta-Vidya according to all known sources, and assisted in this task by the uncountable references in *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine.* No limits were set upon the use to which scientific, objective methods of analysis might be put in such examination. Conversely, no limits were put upon the depths of mystery or upon the hope of demonstrable realities to be discovered behind the outward appearances of religions. A universal invitation, indeed. No one was required to give up a preferred method of thought unless it involved absolute creedal or materialistic prejudice.

Esoteric Man

The sun shines through a glass and renders it luminous; nevertheless the glass does not become the sun. It merely remains in the light and power of the sun, and the latter shines in and through its substance. Thus it is with the soul in her terrestrial state. As fire glows in hot iron, so are the rays of the Holy Spirit sometimes penetrating the other principle; namely, the new man penetrates the old one. But as iron, whether within or without the forge, always remains iron, likewise it is with the terrestrial man. He undoubtedly has to become a servant for the inner man, whenever the latter penetrates him with his glowing divine fire; and he is willing that this should be so as long as the glow of that fire is within him, but he cannot transform himself into the interior kingdom.

—Jacob Boehme *(Mysterium)*

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK— AND ANSWER

A MAN of mostly uncontrolled selfish desires will sometimes do something for a friend completely contrary to his usual attitude. Perhaps "friendship" itself inspired the man's high moral thoughts, and consequently an unselfish act? But what is this power of friendship? Or we might ask, too, what is this current that is forever contradicting the materialism of life?

Even the most ignorant of men recognizes the dependence of a single man on his fellows; the babe can neither exist nor survive without the parent, who supports his life until he is old enough to take care of himself. As the small person grows, he is constantly in contact with the world moving and living around him, and in the course of these contacts builds up within himself a complicated pattern of attitudes, reactions, and habits which we may call his personality.

Frequently the stream of persons and events which flows into the older person's life are unfortunate: poverty, war, slavery, both religious and economic, may cloud his day-to-day existence with problems which are, for him, practically insurmountable. He may lose his faith in his religion, his fellow men, his world, and finally in himself. His life seems to become a daily fight for survival against too great odds, and his thoughts and expressions express his inner bitterness and confusion.

Let us assume that this man has heard nothing of the "brotherhood of man," nor has he any conception of the higher and lower nature of man. But possibly with no conscious philosophy in his mind, he yet extends himself in personal sacrifice to his friend, despite the fact that his interest in the "friendship" itself may have seemed purely selfish.

We learn in the first fundamental that all men are a part of the whole, and that on the higher planes, the soul and spirit are in harmony. Though the "person" may be submerged in his own mental and psychic confusions, the soul remains in a sense free. Perhaps we could say that the soul supports the higher qualities, and that despite the conditions of the lower nature and the body of man, this link

does not become broken; hence the link between soul and spirit serves as a channel for contact between human beings. It is somewhat like the sun always shining, above the clouds; at times its light shines through the breaks in the clouds. So, with the person, when there are breaks in the clouds of the confused lower nature.

Are there existing organizations that have declared purposes which are similar to the principles of U.L.T.?

There are many organizations that could be said to have declared purposes similar to U.L.T.—brotherhood on the basis of respect for each individual as an individual conscience. If we judge these organizations on the basis that they do not use theosophical terms, we would find little in our search for parallels on the fundamentals of U.L.T. But if we investigate or inquire for the reason that we wish to find other individuals or organizations working with a similarity of *aim,* that is, the betterment of man, we frequently *will* find organizations of this nature.

To be more specific, the American Civil Liberties Union is very helpful to oppressed minorities, because it has as its purpose the defense of the rights of the individual American citizen. This would include upholding the Constitution and particularly the Bill of Rights. The A.C.L.U. gives financial and moral aid to individuals who are being discriminated against because of "race, creed or organization."

One educational organization is the Anti-Narcotic League. It goes into the schools all over America trying to educate the young so there will never be a desire by the young for narcotics of any kind. However, an organization of this kind must be very careful of the type of education used on this pressing problem of our youth. A negative, as well as a positive, attitude will appear if there is too much concentration on the evils of narcotics.

It must be understood that such organizations are very much needed in American culture, but ultimately they will not accomplish their aim, which is brotherhood, unless there is more of a philosophical basis established, namely, Theosophy. H. P. Blavatsky, speaking in an article entitled "Our Three Objects," illustrates this point:

> Social differentiations, the result of physical evolutions and material environment, breed race hatreds and sectarian and social antipathies that are insurmountable if attacked from the outside. But, since human nature is ever identical, all men are alike open to influences which centre upon the human "heart," and appeal to the human intuition; and as there is but one Absolute Truth, and this is the soul and life of all human creeds, it is possible to effect a reciprocal alliance for the research of and dissemination of that basic Truth.

If there is to be understanding in the world, if there is to be a world where we will not have dissensions or racial differences, it will have to be done through Theosophy, pure and simple. In endeavoring to accomplish the central aim of the theosophical movement—universal brotherhood—it seems evident that we will, as individuals, have to believe in the idea of brotherhood ourselves on the basis of its philosophical meaning.

It is stated in the U.L.T. Declaration that the Lodge "does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion." This sounds like a good policy, but rather impractical. It is also said that "The policy of this Lodge is INDEPENDENT *devotion to the cause of Theosophy." The adjective, independent, immediately suggests individual ways of devoting and applying oneself, with consequent differences of opinion. Again, in the third paragraph, we find the expression* "SIMILARITY" *of aim and purpose instead of "sameness." These distinctions appear to point at differences instead of away from them; yet if the Lodge is not "concerned" with differences, are they ignored or superficially smoothed over?*

This question brings out the understanding and wisdom which stands behind the Declaration. Unlike authoritarian systems of thought which automatically assume that everyone should believe the same, and act the same, U.L.T. expects differences of opinion and welcomes any and all sincere questions. We see, then, the theosophical idea is to stimulate and open minds, to discuss and evaluate ideas. In this we have a way of bringing about self-conscious unity.

If the full implications of the phrase, "similarity of aim, purpose, and teaching," are recognized, the essence and genius of U.L.T. as an association and not as an organization stands self-evident. Here we have earnest individual students, not necessarily "intellectuals," who through their *own* ways of reasoning and contemplation recog-

nize the essential validity of the three Fundamentals and the great need of disseminating these principles. The "sole bond" between the Associates, then, is common study of Theosophy.

The "room" given for independent devotion and all self-induced, self-devised efforts and the absence of any authorities on matters of "the philosophy" are safeguards taken to prevent the entrance of religious authoritarianism and bigotry. Differences in regard to "the right way" of progressing along the path towards "a truer realization of the Self" were anticipated from the first. The only spiritual authority is the Buddhic quality in each aspirant, and thus soul-evolution must proceed from within outward. Robert Crosbie in *The Friendly Philosopher* calls for tolerance: "Our way is essentially our way, and his is his, and equally right and important."

Attention, naturally, is given to individual actions which vitally contradict the spirit and purposes of the Declaration, for the non-organizational, non-authoritarian spirit of U.L.T. is at times not easily lived up to. Mistakes of this nature may be expected to occur; but in such cases the U.L.T. tradition is for concerned individuals to examine such problems by objective criticism among those immediately involved. Dissensions are not fostered on the level of soul, but stem from the personality.

"Side issues," *i.e.,* various individual opinions on outside events, situations, and controversial subjects, are recognized as signs of individual interest and bias; this kind of diversity indicates the lack of thought regimentation. Different sentiments exist, and there is no attempt made to deny this, but they are considered small in light of the work on hand. "We have devoted our lives to it [the fight for recognition of Theosophy, pure and simple], and there is no energy to spare for any other issue." *(The Friendly Philosopher.)*

Even though Theosophy should, because of its very nature, foster the most universal and open-minded of attitudes in its students, one often sees the tendency in them, and in oneself, to narrow the vision; to make of Theosophy a religion instead of a philosophy. Having devoted a great deal of time and energy to the study of Theosophy —sometimes to the exclusion of other interests—one may find that Theosophical DOCTRINES *have a monopoly on his thinking. He may find himself using his conception of Theosophy as a static "frame of reference" into which other ideas either fit or do not fit, and are un-*

thinkingly judged good or bad accordingly. How can we avoid this essentially "religious" attitude?

Theosophy is a key which opens many doors of mystery for the inquiring mind. It has been defined as "the rational explanation of things as they are." Therefore, when one first contacts the teachings, he may well find them extremely interesting. And when he has become somewhat familiar with the basic concepts of the philosophy and has made for himself any sort of working hypothesis of them, he may, by that time, be overwhelmed by the apparent authenticity of the teachings. He may feel that at last he has found the truth—*all* rational explanation—and this can be a very comfortable feeling to acquire.

Whenever men attach themselves to any knowledge not shared by most other people, it is very easy for them to become self-righteous, and in this case to judge all things rather partially from its high eminence. Sometimes this attitude leads to another and worse one—condemnation.

How many times have we been talking to another when suddenly we realize that he isn't listening to us at all? He appears to be patiently waiting for us to finish talking so he can present his own viewpoint. He is satisfied with his own ideas, apparently, and since ours are not the same, he doesn't even bother to consider them. Somehow, we can't quite forgive him that sort of contempt for ideas. It is this unconscious judgment—not against a particular idea, but rather, against different ideas of any kind—that needs to be fought *in ourselves.*

Of course, when we are guilty of reacting like dogmatists we simply illustrate the desire for security that every man may feel. One seeks security in many varieties of material things, but more important to him is his request for security in the world of ideas. He would *like* to know certainty in this world of endless confusion, and this is not such an unreasonable desire to have, after all. Yet closed-mindedness lies at the core of that religious attitude from which the inquirer into Theosophy may originally have been trying to escape.

If we could but look for truth wherever it exists with clear and interested gaze, how much sweeter and more natural would be our relationships with ideas—and with our fellows. It is perhaps better to seek and not find, than to "find" and then—not seek.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RENUNCIATION

THE liberation of the province of Psychology from a hostile theological regency has brought about a complexity of results. The primary development during the subsequent anti-religious and anti-metaphysical age has been, obviously, in conformity with the great materialistic biases. Yet there is also impressive evidence that in this age, as in all times and places, stimuli to *free* inquiry encourage valuable, even occult, insights. The fundamental psychological verities of Occultism are, in fact, said to be within the reach of the understanding of the average man—"hidden" only because of the barriers he has himself created, through religious self-righteousness, or by materialistic denial of the Soul.

Kernels of wisdom may often emerge in unexpected quarters, as, for instance, within the context of "normal living" in this pleasure-loving age. A recent book, *How to Stop Smoking,* may be cited as an example, and perhaps serve, too, as a point of departure for a good deal of theosophical thought. Author Herbert Brean did not sell his book through claims to philosophical status. The common sense of his approach to the problem of "giving up" tobacco was obviously what impressed the publishers, and his arguments were subsequently reproduced in the gaudy magazine, *Pageant,* for the same reason. Behind this common sense, though, as is so often the case, something of "occult" psychology is undeniably present.

Mr. Brean's argument is that we cannot change physical habits successfully unless and until we have adopted an *impartial* attitude. Horror documents on the physical harm done by tobacco, for instance, will only produce some sort of unbalanced emotional conversion, similar to those extremities of religious resolve which men have characteristically failed to keep intact. Mr. Brean therefore recommends that the man who wishes to relinquish the smoking habit should *first* sit down and carefully enumerate all of the benefits and enjoyments the use of tobacco has supplied! "There are many good reasons why you should not give up smoking, and until you examine them all, take them into full account and acknowledge their validity, you will be in a psychologically defensive position. You will be like a man trying to free himself from the embrace of an octupus

without even knowing how many arms it has."

It is not difficult to see that this recommendation is based upon one of those crucial theosophical principles which distinguish Theosophy from conventional religions. The latter have ever relied upon the emotional approach, used the "fear and horror" or the "supreme reward" method to gain subservient converts—and have been unable to help men stabilize the conversion.

The theosophist, we must assume, seeks first to be a philosopher, a searcher for the truth. Searching for the truth requires, in turn, an attitude of mind which leaves the powers of concentration free from personal emotions and prejudices. Decisions based upon either untrammelled desire or psychic aversion invariably give us incomplete definitions of Good and Evil, which may be one of the reasons why all theosophical teaching counsels against reliance on rigid categories of Good and Evil.

From the standpoint of philosophy, as above defined, no human action or habit is either completely good or completely evil. All human decisions are involved in error, and in the partial truths cohering to any rationalized desire. Conversely, all human decisions are also involved in truth. The task of the philosopher is to weigh, not only the core, but also the minutiae, of both alternatives to a decision, using criteria above and beyond fleeting emotional biases.

Karma is best represented as a wide and finely woven web, not a clear, hard line. The selfishly eager ascetic who leaves wife and children to attain "enlightenment" has already succumbed to delusion, precisely because he acts while under the mere *glamour* of the ideal of "Impersonality." He does not move freely onward from self-identifying attachment to family to what he imagines will be a higher plane of soul-existence, but rather applies "self-identification" in an even less meaningful manner. For he attaches himself to a negative value, and thereby loses the opportunity, however limited it may be, in his case, of playing some instructive part in the lives of others.

"Renunciation," it seems, all too often attaches itself to either a negative or a selfish value, frequently to both. This is particularly apt to be the case, we should think, when one turns his back on some sphere of life in which he has been frustrated. Certainly we are never invited by natural karmic circumstance to transcend any sort of experience until we have learned to acquit ourselves therein both

nobly and pleasantly. Unless a man learns how to make the most of a humble dwelling, appreciating its small virtues while striving to cope with its accompanying disadvantages, it seems of a certainty that his use of a more spacious habitation will also fail to bring happiness—or good management to the larger household.

Also involved in the question of Renunciation is Pleasure. The thought that "pleasure" or "happiness" must be "given up" in order to live a higher life becomes a powerful command when interpolated by religious schemes for salvation. Modern psychologists seem to have the truth of it when they point out that men so preoccupied with their own destiny are simply seeking another form of gratification, based upon the familiar motivation of self-interest. And, in addition, one pursuing this path usually acquires as companion that worst foe to impartial thinking—self-righteousness. The theosophical objection to the psychology of orthodox Christianity is largely that the understandable self-righteous foibles of the ambitious man are given sanction and presumed sanctity by a powerful social institution, making it ever more difficult for the individual to awaken to his delusions. When one acquires *status* through adherence to a moral code based on self-righteousness, the self-righteousness becomes extremely tenacious. More than ever are one's honest doubts allayed by membership in whatever exclusive brotherhood claims to show *the* Right Way to Live. Contempt and condemnation of others follow, with organized religion serving as a bulwark against self-questioning.

Why, in the name of sanity, should any man "renounce" pleasure? The *Gita* recommends regarding pleasure and pain alike—as instructors of the soul. The man who cannot *use* pleasure cannot properly meet pain, since it is equal-mindedness towards both the Opposites which is enjoined. The man who flees from "pleasure" will someday flee also from pain, since only the attitude of accepting whatever nature has in store brings equal-mindedness and consistent courage. The *seeking* of pleasure, as a first value and end in itself, is another matter. Pleasure, when viewed through such eyes is indeed Mara, the Great Ensnarer. But what of those who seek the *absence* of pleasure to gain merit or supposed spiritual advancement? The same Mara, showing another face, awaits.

For those who feel an inner prompting to give up any habit, then, it seems advisable first to consider all of the reasons which existed

for its formation. No man begins a habit without feeling that some value is produced by the type of action it represents. To see wherein our ways of the past are "wrong" is never enough. The man of clear vision will see from both sides—both the wrong, and the bit of truth, or rightness, too. When he separates himself from a "bad habit" after such an evaluation, he is not trying to separate himself from his Past, as Karma decrees no man ever can, but only from those aspects of the habit which are recognized as harmful. So Mr. Brean must be right in advising against "trying to rid ourselves of the embrace of an octopus without even knowing how many arms it has."

One of the many compelling features about the Gautama Buddha legend of renunciation is that the Prince Siddartha knew all of the prized pleasures of life before foregoing them by *outgrowing* them. True, he was said to have finally determined that most of these were ensnarers of Mara, mere illusions of happiness, but he came to the pilgrimage for occult learning from the background of a "lover of life" rather than that of a life cynic. And it was not the gentle Prophet of Nazareth who fulminated against the wickedness of "carnal pleasure," but the bitter, self-accusing Augustine.

The great leaders of the poor and oppressed, men of creative minds all, turned away from a game unworthy of their broad vision, not defeated by "normal living," but merely beyond its shallowness—something entirely different from being contemptuous of small pleasures or zealously opposed to their enjoyment. Such humanitarians were never much concerned with Sin, but, instead, dwelt on each man's capacity to reach "the good, the true, and the beautiful." Perhaps they "renounced" much, yet so completely without ostentation that they must have been entirely unaware of their austerities.

Tracing the implications of many of H.P.B.'s remarks on the subject of religious psychology, a student might be encouraged to attempt the formulation of an occult truth of signal proportions. For may it not be that any man who seeks consciously to "renounce" his connection with "normal living" risks damaging one or more of his sensory or mental instruments to the extent that balanced perception is therefore, for a long time, impossible? It is clear that the harmony of all the centers of being must precede psychic or even physical improvement.

FROM "THE OCCULT WORLD"

VI

[Calling bizarre attention to A. P. Sinnett's *Occult World,* first published in June, 1881, the "Kiddle incident" broke upon the theosophical world in the summer of 1883. Henry Kiddle was an American spiritualist who, in August, 1880, addressed a gathering at Lake Pleasant, New York, with a speech which he later charged the Master K.H. with having plagiarized in one of his letters to Sinnett. The passage thus made famous began, "Plato was right. Ideas rule the world"—a most appropriate keynote for the entire Kiddle incident, as ultimately appeared. The main features of this event will be found treated in the history, *The Theosophical Movement* (pp. 55-7, 437, and 535, 1925 ed.; and pp. 80-1, 1951 ed.), but the full account given in Sinnett's Appendix will repay reading in full. This Appendix was added to the fourth edition of *The Occult World* (1884), from which we extract this concluding installment of the present series.

The Spiritualists conceived Kiddle's charges as not only having cut the ground from under Sinnett's book, but also as discrediting the whole Theosophical doctrine of Mahatmas and Adepts, thus reducing Theosophic philosophy to merely another "message" from the mixed regions contacted by mediums and clairvoyants. The theosophists of the day, left to devise their own explanations and choose their own interpretation of the facts, divided themselves into various camps, and since an appreciable interval elapsed before the "other side" was heard from, Sinnett received a new demonstration of the Adepts' indifference to public opinion. Since this attitude on the part of the Theosophical Mahatmas had been the occasion for Sinnett's first letter to "the Brothers" (see July THEOSOPHY, p. 391), the Kiddle incident only served to re-emphasize the primary importance of teaching the great ethical ideas of Theosophy, and of fostering a philosophy of *brotherhood.*—Eds. THEOSOPHY.]

IN due course [writes Sinnett] I received a long and instructive explanation of the mystery from Mahatma Koothoomi himself; but this letter reached me under the seal of the most absolute confidence. Rigidly adhering to the policy which had all along restrained within narrow limits the communication of their teaching to the world at large, the Brothers remained as anxious as ever to leave everybody full intellectual liberty to disbelieve in them, and

reject their revelation if his spiritual intuitions were not of a kind to be readily kindled. In the same way that from the first they had refused me the overwhelming and irresistible proofs of their power, which I had sought for in the beginning as weapons with which I might successfully combat incredulity, they now shrank from interfering with the conclusions of any readers who might be found capable, after the rich assurances of the later teaching, of distrusting the Mahatmas on the strength of a suspicion which was ill founded in reality, plausible though it might seem. . . .

[*Several hints were conveyed to readers of* THE THEOSOPHIST *magazine, in December, by Subba Row and General Morgan.* —Eds. THEOSOPHY.]

A month or two after the appearance of these fragmentary hints, I received a note from the Mahatma relieving me of all restrictions previously imposed on the full letter of explanation he had previously sent me. The subject, by that time, however, seemed to have lost its interest for all persons in England whose opinions I valued. Within the London Theosophical Society, now already a large and growing body, the Kiddle incident was looked on as little more than a joke, and the notion that the Mahatma, who had inspired the teachings of *Esoteric Buddhism* [Sinnett's second book, published in 1883], could have "plagiarized" from a spiritualistic lecture, as so absurd on the face of things that no appearances seeming to endorse that conception could have any importance. . . .

I did not feel disposed, therefore, to treat the suspicions some critics had entertained with the respect that would have been involved in any appeal from me to the public to listen to what would have been represented as a defence—and a strangely postponed defence—of the Mahatma.

Now, however, that this new edition of the *Occult World* is required, there is an obvious propriety in the course I now take. The new letter from the Mahatma constitutes in itself a correction of the letter from which I quote on pages 101-102,* and apart from the interest of the explanation it furnishes in regard to the precipitation process, the thoughts it conveys are in themselves valuable and suggestive.

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*See November issue, p. 28.—Eds., THEOSOPHY.

"The letter in question," writes the Mahatma, referring to the communication I originally received, "was framed by me while on a journey and on horseback. It was dictated mentally in the direction of and 'precipitated' by a young chela not yet expert at this branch of psychic chemistry, and who had to transcribe it from the hardly visible imprint. Half of it, therefore, was omitted, and the other half more or less distorted by the 'artist.' When asked by him at the time whether I would look over and correct it, I answered—imprudently, I confess—'Anyhow will do, my boy; it is of no great importance if you skip a few words.' I was physically very tired by a ride of forty-eight hours consecutively, and (physically again) half asleep. Besides this, I had very important business to attend to *psychically,* and therefore little remained of me to devote to that letter. When I awoke I found it had already been sent on, and as I was not then anticipating its publication, I never gave it from that time a thought.

"Now I had never evoked spiritual Mr. Kiddle's physiognomy, never had heard of his existence, was not aware of his name. Having —owing to our correspondence, and your Simla surroundings and friends—felt interested in the intellectual progress of the Phenomenalists, I had directed my attention, some two months previous, to the great annual camping movement of the American Spiritualists in various directions, among others to Lake or Mount Pleasant. Some of the curious ideas and sentences representing the general hopes and aspirations of the American Spiritualists remained impressed on my memory, and I remembered only these ideas and detached sentences quite apart from the personalities of those who harbored or pronounced them. Hence my entire ignorance of the lecturer whom I have innocently defrauded, as it would appear, and who raises the hue and cry. Yet had I dictated my letter in the form it now appears in print, it would certainly look suspicious, and however far from what is generally called plagiarism, yet in the absence of any inverted commas it would lay a foundation for censure. But I did nothing of the kind, as the original impression now before me clearly shows. And before I proceed any further I must give you some explanation of the mode of *precipitation.*

"The recent experiments of the Psychic Research Society will help you greatly to comprehend the rationale of this 'mental telegraphy.' You have observed in the *Journal* of that body how thought trans-

ference is cumulatively effected. The image of the geometrical or other figure which the active brain has had impressed upon it is gradually imprinted upon the recipient brain of the passive subject, as the series of reproductions illustrated in the cuts show. Two factors are needed to produce a perfect and instantaneous mental telegraphy—close concentration in the operator and complete receptive passivity in the reader subject. Given a disturbance of either condition, and the result is proportionately imperfect. The reader does not see the image as in the telegrapher's brain, but as arising in his own. When the latter's thought wanders, the psychic current becomes broken, the communication disjointed and incoherent. In a case such as mine the chela had, as it were, to pick up what he could from the current I was sending him, and, as above remarked, patch the broken bits together as best he might.

Do you not see the same thing in ordinary mesmerism—the *maya* impressed upon the subject's imagination by the operator becoming now stronger, now feebler, as the latter keeps the intended illusive image more or less steadily before his own fancy? And how often the clairvoyants reproach the magnetizer for taking their thoughts off the subject under consideration. And the mesmeric healer will always bear you witness that if he permits himself to think of anything but the vital current he is pouring into his patient, he is at once compelled to either establish the current afresh or stop the treatment. So I, in this instance having at the moment more vividly in my mind the psychic diagnosis of current spiritualistic thought, of which the Lake Pleasant speech was one marked symptom, unwittingly transferred that reminiscence more vividly than my own remarks upon it and deductions therefrom. So to say, the 'despoiled victim's'—Mr. Kiddle's—utterances came out as a high light, and were more sharply photographed (first, in the chela's brain, and thence on the paper before him, a double process, and one far more difficult than 'thought reading' simply), while the rest,—my remarks thereupon and arguments—as I now find, are hardly visible and quite blurred on the original scraps before me.

"Put into a mesmeric subject's hand a sheet of blank paper, tell him it contains a certain chapter of some book that you have read, concentrate your thoughts upon the words, and see how—*provided that he has himself not read the chapter,* but only takes it from your memory

—his reading will reflect your own more or less vivid successive recollections of your author's language. The same as to the precipitation by the chela of the transferred thought upon (or rather, *into*) paper: if the mental picture received be feeble, his visible reproduction of it must correspond. And the more so in proportion to the closeness of attention he gives. He might—were he but merely a person of the true mediumistic temperament—be employed by his "Master" as a sort of *psychic printing machine* producing lithographed or psychographed impressions of what the operator had in mind; his nerve system the machine, his nerve aura the printing fluid, the colors drawn from that exhaustless storehouse of pigments (as of everything else), the *akasa.* But the medium and the chela are diametrically dissimilar, and the latter acts consciously, except under exceptional circumstances during development not necessary to dwell upon here.

"Well, as soon as I heard of the change—the commotion among my defenders having reached me across the eternal snows—I ordered an investigation into the original scraps of the impression. At the first glance I saw that it was I, the only and most guilty party,—the poor boy having done but that which he was told. Having now restored the characters and the lines—omitted and blurred beyond hope of recognition by any one but their original *evolver*—to their primitive color and places, I now find my letter reading quite differently, as you will observe. Turning to the *Occult World*—the copy sent by you—to the page cited, I was struck, upon carefully reading it, by the great discrepancy between the sentences. A gap, so to say, of ideas between part 1 and part 2—the plagiarized portion so called. There seems no connection at all between the two; for what has, indeed, the determination of our chiefs (to prove to a skeptical world that physical phenomena are as reducible to law as anything else) to do with Plato's ideas which 'rule the world,' or 'Practical Brotherhood of Humanity'? I fear that it is your personal friendship alone for the writer that has blinded you to the discrepancy and disconnection of ideas in this abortive 'precipitation' *even until now.* Otherwise you could not have failed to perceive that something was wrong on that page; that there was a glaring defect in the connection. Moreover, I have to plead *guilty* to another sin: I have never so much as looked at my letters in print—until the day of the forced investigation. I have read only your own original matter, feeling it a loss of

time to go over my hurried bits and scraps of thought. But now, I have to ask you to read the passages as they were originally dictated by me, and make the comparison with the *Occult World* before you. . . . I enclose the copy *verbatim* from the restored fragments, underlining in red the *omitted* sentences for easier comparison.

". . . Phenomenal elements previously unthought of . . . will disclose at last the secrets of their mysterious workings. Plato was right *to readmit every element of speculation which Socrates had discarded. The problems of universal being are not unattainable, or worthless if attained. But the latter can be solved only by mastering those elements that are now looming on the horizons of the profane. Even the Spiritualists, with their mistaken, grotesquely perverted views and notions, are hazily realizing the new situation. They prophesy—and their prophecies are not always without a point of truth in them—of intuitional prevision, so to say. Hear some of them reasserting the old, old axiom that* 'Ideas rule the world'; and as men's minds receive new ideas, laying aside the old and effete, the world *(will)* advance, mighty revolutions *(will)* spring from them; *institutions (aye, and even* creeds and powers, *they may add)*—WILL crumble before their onward march, crushed by their own *inherent force, not the* irresistible force *of the 'new ideas' offered by the Spiritualists! Yes; they are both right and wrong.* It will be 'just as impossible to resist their influence when the time comes as to stay the progress of the tide'—*to be sure. But what the Spiritualists fail to perceive, I see, and their spirits to explain (the latter knowing no more than what they can find in the brains of the former) is, that all this* will come gradually on; and *that* before it comes *they, as well as ourselves,* have all a duty *to perform, a task* set before us: that of sweeping away as much as possible the dross left to us by our pious forefathers.

"New ideas have to be planted on clean places, for these ideas touch upon the most momentous subjects. It is not physical phenomena, *or the agency called Spiritualism,* but these universal ideas that we *have precisely to* study; *the noumenon, not the phenomenon,* for, to comprehend the LATTER we have first to understand the FORMER. They *do* touch man's true position in the Universe, to be sure,—*but only* in relation to his FUTURE *not* PREVIOUS births. *It is not physical phenomena, however wonderful, that can ever explain to man* his

origin, *let alone* his ultimate destiny, *or as one of them expresses it* —the relation of the mortal to the immortal, of the temporary to the eternal, of the finite to the infinite, *etc., etc. They talk very glibly of what they regard as new ideas,* 'larger, *more general,* grander, more comprehensive,' *and at the same time, they recognize instead* of the eternal reign of immutable law, *the universal reign of law as the expression of a divine will (!) Forgetful of their earlier beliefs, and that 'it repented the Lord that he had made Man,' these would-be philosophers and reformers would impress upon their hearers that the expression of the said Divine will 'is unchanging and unchangeable*—in regard to which there is only an ETERNAL Now, while to mortals (uninitiated?) time is past or future as related to their finite existence on this material *plane,'—of which they know as little as of their spiritual spheres*—a speck of dirt *they have made the latter, like our own earth, a future life that the true philosopher would rather avoid than court. But I dream with my eyes open. . . . At all events, this is not any privileged teachings of their own. Most of these ideas are taken piecemeal from Plato and the Alexandrian Philosophers.* It is what we *all* study, and what many have solved. . . . etc., etc.

"This is the true copy of the original document as now restored—the 'Rosetta stone' of the Kiddle incident. And now, if you have understood my explanations about the process, as given in a few words further back, you need not ask me how it came to pass that, though somewhat disconnected, the sentences transcribed by the *chela* are mostly those that are now considered as plagiarized, while the missing links are precisely those phrases that would have shown the passages were simply reminiscences, if not quotations—the key-note around which came grouping my own reflections on that morning. For the first time in my life I had paid a serious attention to the utterances of the poetical 'media' of the so-called 'inspirational' oratory of the English-American lecturers, its quality and limitations. I was struck with all this brilliant but empty verbiage, and recognized for the first time fully its pernicious intellectual tendency. It was their gross and unsavory materialism, hiding clumsily under its shadowy spiritual veil, that attracted my thought at the time. While dictating the sentences quoted—a small portion of the many I had been pondering over for some days—it was those ideas that were

thrown out *en relief* the most, leaving out my own parenthetical remarks to disappear in the precipitation."

[*Two further paragraphs on the "Kiddle incident," taken from K.H.'s letters to Sinnett, throw light on the charge of "plagiarism," and correlate with H.P.B.'s use of the Akasic "library" in the writing of* ISIS UNVEILED *and* THE SECRET DOCTRINE *(see "Authorship of Secret Doctrine,"* THEOSOPHY 38: 54).—*Eds.*]

"If you would go on with your occult studies and literary work—then learn to be loyal to the Idea, rather than to my poor self. When something is to be done, never think whether I wish it, before acting. . . . I am far from being perfect, hence infallible, in all I do; tho' it is not quite as you imagine having now discovered. For you know, or think you know, of *one* K.H.—and can know but of one, whereas there are two distinct personages answering to that name *in him* you know. The riddle is only apparent and easy to solve, were you only to know what a real *Mahatma* is. You have seen by the Kiddle incident—perchance allowed to develop to its bitter end for a purpose—that even an 'adept' when acting in his body is not beyond mistakes due to human carelessness. You now understand that he is as likely as not to make himself look absurd in the eyes of those who have no right understanding of the phenomena of thought-transference and astral precipitations—and all this, through lack of simple caution. There is always that danger if one has neglected to ascertain whether the words and sentences rushing into the mind have come all from *within* or whether some may have been impressed from *without*. . . .

"I have a habit of often quoting, *minus* quotation marks—from the maze of what I get in the countless folios of our Akasic libraries, so to say—with eyes shut. Sometimes I may give out thoughts that will see light years later; at other times what an orator, a Cicero, may have pronounced ages earlier, and at others, what was not only pronounced by modern lips but already either written or printed—as in the Kiddle case. All this I do (not being a trained writer for the Press) without the smallest concern as to where the sentences and strings of words may have come from, so long as they serve to express, and fit in with, my own thoughts. . . .

"I am accused of *'plagiarism.'* We, of Tibet and China, know not what you mean by the word. *I* do, but this is no reason, perhaps, why I should accept *your* literary laws. Any writer has the privilege of taking out whole sentences from the dictionary of *Pai-Wouen-Yen-Fu,* the greatest in the world, full of quotations from every known writer, and containing all the phrases ever used—and to frame them to express his thought. This does not apply to the Kiddle case which happened just as I told you. But you may find, perchance, throughout my letters, twenty detached sentences which may have been already used in books or MSS. When you write upon some subject you surround yourself with books of references, etc.: when we write upon something, the Western opinion about which is unknown to us, we surround ourselves with hundreds of paragraphs upon this particular topic from dozens of different works—impressed upon the Akasa. What wonder, then, that not only a chela entrusted with the work and innocent of any knowledge of the meaning of plagiarism, but even myself—should use occasionally a whole sentence already existent, applying it only to another—our own—idea? . . . *We are not infallible, all-foreseeing 'Mahatmas' at every hour of the day,* good friend: none of you have even learned to remember so much."

What is Incredible?

Truth in our time appears to be a receding rather than an approaching star. There is no end to the philosophical systems offered for our acceptance. To which, then, should we incline? If we are not to abandon speculation, all thought upon the matter, shrug our shoulders at the tilts and tournaments going on everywhere around us, and end where we began, the only course is to accept, till intellect and imagination amend it, that way of thought which seems to leave the fewest difficulties upon our hands, and to account for the greatest number of our experiences. We do well constantly to remind ourselves that we are learning merely the alphabet of reality, and can only proceed with 'a kind of hesitating confidence', as Plato described it, in our reason. —W. Macneile Dixon *(The Human Situation)*

THE BED OF PROCRUSTES

THESEUS, grown to manhood, bade farewell to Ethra, his mother, who had tended him with the watchful care of Mother Nature herself. By his own strength did Theseus roll away the great stone in the forest under which lay his father's golden-hilted sword and his sandals.

"When your father left us to be king of Athens," spake his mother, "he bade me treat you as a child until you should prove yourself a man by rolling away this ancient stone. This you have done, Theseus. Put on these sandals, in order to follow in your father's footsteps, and gird on his sword so you may fight giants and dragons as the King your father did in his youth. You are now a man, and must go to your father to claim your kingdom when the time comes."

Two paths stretched before young Theseus, two ways by which to reach his father. To sail by sea would bring him but fifteen miles from the city of Athens, free from danger, hunger and fatigue. Strongly did his aged grandfather King Pittheus urge this route. "By land the roads are very bad," he said. "They are terribly infested with robbers and monsters. A lad like you is unfit for such a perilous journey alone. Prithee, do not go by land."

But Theseus, the soul of a hero smouldering within his breast, determined to take the difficult land road. His blood quickened. "Robbers, monsters, tormenting each weary traveller! They say I am too young, but if I cannot quench these scourges on the way, t'were better never to reach my father, never claim my kingdom."

Over rocky crags, down treacherous gullies, through soft meadows he went. Scarcely had he lost sight of his native city than danger breathed upon him. Cautiously and slowly he proceeded, for he knew that many perils lurked along his father's pathway.

Now his mother's parting words rang in his ear: "The road is steep and winds uphill; yea to its rocky top. Grey mists will overhang its stony height, and all be dark beyond. As on you go, the song of hope may sound more feeble in your heart. The thrill of doubt may make your step less steady. Beware of this, O Theseus! Beware of fear that spreadeth, like the black and soulless wings of midnight bat,

between the moonlight of thy soul and the great goal that loometh in the distance far away."

Each dawn found Theseus further on his path. When with dripping sword upraised he gazed upon a fallen giant, or a cruel robber, helpless now, he heard an echoing voice within him breathe these soundless words: "Remember, thou that fightest for man's liberation, every evil thou slayest for the sake of others, will never overpower you, for you slay it in yourself also."

* * *

A certain people, now called the early Gnostics, were the first to introduce and reveal to the world the meaning of the adventures of Theseus, which had remained concealed for ages. One of these adventures of Theseus was also expanded in the beautiful idea adopted by and represented in the Mysteries, that of regenerated man, the mortal who, by crucifying the man of flesh and his passions on the Procrustean bed of torture, became reborn as an immortal. Leaving the body, the animal man, behind him, tied on the cross of initiation, the Ego Soul became free.

* * *

Brown of skin, hardened of muscle, the glance of a hero flaming from his eye, Theseus came footsore and weary upon the house of one whose name was yet to ring upon the ears of a whole world of men to come. Cruel, he has been called, a deceptive giant who under the pretext of entertainment invited weary travellers into his home. Within there stood a certain bed, 'tis said, of iron wrought. Fast to this bedstead he would tie all travellers who fell into his hands. If they were shorter than the bed, he stretched their limbs to fit it; if they were longer than the bed, Procrustes lopped off their head or feet, so that, however weary a man might be, he never liked to lie in the bed of Procrustes.

Yet Theseus did not find this giant cruel. Though his feet were bruised by the sharp stones on the way, the grime of many days beneath the blazing sun upon his body, his face blackened and unwashed, himself unrested, he spoke to Procrustes as a friend! Before he crossed the threshold of Procrustes' house, he heard that voice which spoke upon his first victory—a voice that speaks where there is none to speak:

"Thou, that art directing thy will to the attainment of perfection —thou that wilt be content with nothing short of the highest, hearken to a description of the road thou must travel.

"Think not that thou shalt attain in a day the power even to recognize the illusions of sense for what they are. Many a time shalt thou sink and wallow in the mire, but at each withdrawal it shall seem to thee more hateful than before, and if only thy will be directed aright the God in thee will not long leave thee wandering. And think not that thy road will be a pleasant one. After some few gleams of brightness to refresh thee, it will lead through the torture-chamber, and when thou art there thou needest not to stir a finger. All shall be done for thee, and thy soul shall endure searching agony, and of the loftiest thoughts and most impassioned dreams shall be formed the rack on which thou shalt be stretched."

Theseus entered the house of the giant. After he had rested and supped, Procrustes led him to the bedchamber where stood the iron bedstead. Theseus was a willing candidate for a series of tortures, physical and mental, which he knew lay before him. Laying himself upon the bed he let the giant tie him down. Who can say how long he lay there? Fancies of the brain, demons and gods, he saw. And now again within his heart breathed the voice:

"Nor when one fancy is over and the cords are loosed, imagine that thou art then free. Thou mayest spend many years—perchance even thy whole life—in this chamber, and again and again shalt thou be stretched on the rack, so soon as thou art able to bear it. And happy is it for thee if between the pangs thou dost not fall away from this high calling—weaving again entanglements of the senses—for then thou dost but repeat the previous torment and dost not advance to the more subtle trials that await the spirit. But if there be no falling away, then are the intervals filled with a peace and bliss which is a foretaste of the joys beyond, and the soul, like one escaped from a dark dungeon, revels in the light of day."

Thus Theseus, in the secret chamber of affliction and divine contemplation, heard. Thus is the human soul consumed away and transformed, though few there are who in a single incarnation are strong enough to endure the complete purging, as did Theseus.

ON THE LOOKOUT

Magic Tibet

There is something of the "escapist" in every man, perhaps, and in these worrisome days, more than a little enjoyment and benefit can be reaped from a vicarious visit to "another world." A young Frenchman, Amaury de Riencourt, provides us with one such happy invitation in his book, *Roof of the World,* the story of his journey to Tibet, which he terms the "Key to Asia." His book has many facets, revealing not only the history and political significance of Tibet, but also the geographic and climatic aspects of the country. These, and the tenor of its people's lives, were intimately disclosed to him on the slow journey by horseback over towering mountains and vast valleys until he reached Lhasa, the "Forbidden City" (which it became again in truth immediately after de Riencourt left it in 1947, to remain sealed to the outside world until the Dalai Lama's enthronement in 1951).

Riencourt secured the assignment to Central Asia from the *Intelligence Digest* of London and New York, whose editors were, he says, "foresighted enough to understand that the key to Asia's future was to be found on the Roof of the World."

A Democratic Theocracy

The book, for being only a little over 300 pages, covers much ground, describing the Tibetan people and their way of life, foremost in which is the tremendous establishment in lamaseries and monasteries (one out of every three Tibetans is a monk and nine lamas out of ten are gelukpas, or Yellow Hats, therefore celibate, or supposed to be):

> These startling figures explain the great surplus of women and also, the declining population of the Roof of the World. One does not always become a lama by vocation. Poor families get rid of their children by sending them to a lamasery when they are nine years old. Whether they like it or not, they are ordained and remain lamas for the rest of their lives.
>
> In the monastery, the youngster is entrusted to a relative of the family or a guardian who will be in charge of his spiritual training.

> From then onward, the young monk can rise to any heights in the earthly hierarchy of the lamaist clergy. The spirit and organization of the Tibetan priesthood are very democratic and the four Tungyik Chespos who have reached the highest positions in the clergy are self-made men. Family connections have little influence in their appointment to high office and as for personal wealth, they usually have none.

There are in Tibet more than four hundred thousand monks gathered into five thousand monasteries, of which the largest is the Rice Heap, or Drepung lamasery, where ten thousand lamas of varying degree carry on their spiritual researches and labors. No manual work is required of the lamas other than the preparation of the buttered tea which is a mainstay of the Tibetan diet.

The Silent Interview

Custom dictated that the visitor make a tremendous number of official visits, headed by a public audience with the Dalai Lama. Each call made on the official bodies as a group had to be followed by separate calls to the private homes of each of the dignitaries of state. De Riencourt's first and last visits were perhaps the most remarkable. The audience with the Dalai Lama involved no conversation at all, and a return visit in the afternoon for a private interview with the old Regent, Takra Yondzin Rimpoche, was similarly uncommunicative, judged by Western standards of "conversation." De Riencourt recounts:

> I walked up to the regent and laid my scarf on his knees. My presents were handed by Chumpa [his servant] to a respectful servant and I sat down. The regent inquired about my health and the journey. He then asked about my opinion of Tibet. Carefully instructed beforehand on what to say and what not to say, I replied cautiously.

Interesting Resemblance

> Deep silence ensued—a silence so prolonged that I was becoming embarrassed and uneasy. Had I forgotten to say something or had I done the wrong thing? The elderly Rimpoche's heavily wrinkled and impassive face looked quite formidable. His resemblance to an Indian chief of Arizona or Wyoming was quite amazing. A few questions on my part met with no answer except for a very faint smile on his face. After a good twenty minutes of deep, puzzling

silence, the regent indicated that this fascinating and informative interview was over. I withdrew, thanking him profusely for having given me so much of his valuable time.

"No Real Freedom"

Before he left Tibet, however, de Reincourt had much to thank the Rimpoche for—a private interview lasting for many hours during which the latter was pressed to tell of himself and his initiation into the occult. The report of this talk will be of particular interest to the student who has heard and read more of the Indian yoga system than of the Tibetan, for there are distinct differences in emphasis between the two. The Rimpoche first stressed the fact—noted by other observers of Eastern thought—that:

> "You Westerners do not know what real freedom is. Your dogmas are set and imposed on you from the outside, your religious beliefs became frozen centuries ago. Your religions no longer come from within; they belong to the outside world. Our Eastern knowledge is never clamped down from the outside but has to grow inside us, under the guidance and with the help of the guru. None of our sects is exclusive or pretends that it has the monopoly of truth. Buddhists and Hindus all agree that there are many paths to salvation and each individual is free to choose whichever he prefers. Climate, geography, race and psychology condition the growth of religions. They adapt themselves to the emotional needs of their devotees and are all, basically, as good, one as the other.

"Lingering in the Psychic Universe"

> "My training started with the basic teachings of Yoga, a word which signifies both meditation and link—link between matter and spirit, between man's animal instincts and his Transcendental Consciousness. Whereas Indian Yoga can be divided into three main branches—Hatha Yoga which teaches mastery over the body, Laya Yoga which deals with mastery over the mind, and Raja Yoga which leads ultimately to the knowledge of reality or Samadhi, our Tibetan Yoga is more complicated and deals far more with the development of psycho-physical powers. . . .
>
> "The mystic searching for supreme reality, searching for God as you Westerners would put it, has to tear himself away from the physical world. On the way to supreme reality, he has to travel across the psychic universe. We, in Tibet, have had the weakness to linger too often in the universe of psychic phenomena. This has caused a few Tibetan gurus to forget all about their search for

truth and eventually turn to evil. But to most of us, psychic powers are only a means to greater spiritual achievement.

H.P.B.'s WARNING

The Rimpoche's mention of "lingering too often in the universe of psychic phenomena" will remind students of the warning in *The Voice of the Silence* concerning the Three Halls through which the disciple must pass to reach the Worlds of Rest Eternal: "The WISE ONES tarry not in pleasure-grounds of senses. The WISE ONES heed not the sweet-tongued voices of illusion. . . . having learnt thine own Ajnyana, flee from the Hall of Learning. This Hall is dangerous in its perfidious beauty, is needed but for thy probation. Beware, Lanoo, lest dazzled by illusive radiance, thy Soul should linger and be caught in its deceptive light."

"STUDYING THE VOID"

The Rimpoche's discourse leads through a long period spent in this "Hall of Learning," in the experimentation with and mastery of various psychic powers, and finally comes to the further trial of the "Hall of Wisdom":

> "However, I never forgot the deep purpose of all my efforts. These psychic achievements were nothing but stepping stones towards ultimate reality, nothing but illusions of the sangsaric world. I never relaxed my efforts, concentrating more intensely than ever on crushing desire of any kind, on compassion for all who live and suffer. Gradually, I left behind the world of phenomenon, not only the world of this earth but the universe of the psyche and of supernormal powers. I started studying the Void, climbing the endless spiraling path which leads beyond mystic visions and transcends object or subject, joy or suffering, finite or infinite, time or eternity, existence or nonexistence, to the Void where all those terms are meaningless, towards the Ineffable Reality. Words are of no use, now; they cannot express the inexpressible. Such transcendental illumination cannot be communicated, it can only be experienced."

This was de Reincourt's glimpse of the "Real Tibet," which, he says, and rightly, "transcends politics and economics; it is invisible, beyond sense-perception, beyond intellect. It is the mysterious land of the psyche, of what lies beyond death, a universe to which some Tibetans have the key and which their subtle soul seems to have ex-

plored as thoroughly as Western scientists have explored our physical universe."

Temple Music

The traveller was invited to witness the monthly trance of the State Oracle at the temple of Nechung. We have room here to describe only a small portion of this experience, relating to the music used during the ceremony:

> A booming thunder exploded in the huge hall under the guise of an extraordinary orchestra of trumpets, gongs, cymbals and drums. The lack of harmony could not have been greater and would have hurt the ears of the least musical Westerner. But as time went on I became accustomed to the disharmony, a strange mystical sensation got hold of me. I could not explain the powerful effect of this music and I asked our old lama-guide in a whisper if he could explain the purpose of these weird sounds.
>
> To my surprise, he smiled and told me that these musical vibrations had been discovered after long researches in order to produce feelings of deep devotion and profound veneration on the audience. Why? Because these vibrations are the counterpart of natural sounds produced by the human body—sounds which can be heard when our fingers are pressed on our ears to shut out external sounds. He then pointed out the seven instruments which made up the orchestra and asked me to listen carefully: The thudding of the large drums, the sharp clapping of the damarus made of human skulls, the clashing sound of the cymbals and the wistful sighing of the conch shells, the ringing of the bells, the lamentation of clarinets, the blast of ragdongs, and the shrill of thighbone trumpets.
>
> I tested this the following day . . . putting my fingers on my ears —I pressed them in as deeply as I could and indeed, I heard the same sounds although very faintly: the pulsating heartbeats, the noise of rustling water, the ringing of bells, deep thuds and whatnot. I have made this experiment many times since and can then easily imagine that I am still in a Tibetan temple.

Here, again, the correlation with the *Voice* is obvious, where (p. 11) the student is told to "hear the voice of thy *inner* God in seven manners," which are then enumerated.

"The Spiritual Voids of Asia"

Concluding a large portion of the book devoted to the history of Tibet and its religion, and the history of the other countries of Asia,

de Riencourt explains the hold which Communism has, particularly on China—left religionless and rulerless with the destruction of the Manchu dynasty. "Seen from a distance," de Riencourt remarks, "Communism is a blind force which rushes into the spiritual voids of Asia but will have to stop and think, sooner or later. While it is probable that it would keep many of its political and social features, Asiatic Communism would shed its thin coating of outdated materialism and replace it with a mysticism drawn from the inexhaustible metaphysical resources of Asia. . . ."

> Asia is now in the process of searching for its own values and its own response to the challenge of scientific thought. What will this quest lead to? That is the secret of Asia's destiny, the greatest political riddle of the twentieth century.

Of Buddhism and Christianity

We have only one serious fault to find with *Roof of the World,* and that is in connection with de Riencourt's analysis, early in the book, of the contrast between Buddhism and Christianity. We are told that "Buddhists are intensely proud and selfish, in their way, seeking salvation by their own means and for themselves only: Devote yourselves to your own good. Christians are more humble and, at the same time, more concerned about the salvation of others, in fact, of all mankind." Here de Riencourt seems to fall victim to the common tendency to idealize the religious representations of one's own culture, while failing to give the same attention to unfamiliar patterns of thought. Yet, just previous to the above statement, and perhaps unwittingly, he supplies reasons for the especial respect always accorded Buddhism by Theosophists:

> Whereas Westerners put the accent on *faith,* the Orientals put it on *knowledge.* Whereas Christians insist on *charity and unselfishness,* Buddhists insist on *right views,* i.e., he who *knows* cannot possibly be selfish.

Operation Crossroads

An unusually comprehensive article in the *Saturday Evening Post* for Oct. 20, by Irving Wallace, sharply focuses attention on one of the most significant controversies of the scientific age—that of prefrontal lobotomy. Theosophists will feel strongly opposed to such

operations on principle, since they are aware that by these means the psycho-physical connection between the Higher Ego of conscience and Lower Manas may be ruptured. But apart from the natural dislike felt by many for this whole trend towards radical brain surgery, the present status of prefrontal lobotomy in the scientific world has great social and moral significance.

A Karmic Consequence

Among surgeons, there is violent disagreement as to the advisability of the method. Second, and more importantly, we have here an area of ultimate decision, inevitably brought on by the continued determination of physiologists to approach the mental and moral improvement of the human species by physical means. The amazing knowledge of the surgeon, based upon years of disciplined study, now enables him to change the personality of the patient by the incision of a knife. This, we can see, is the closest men have come to the dream of Frankenstein—the actual *making* of men.

Many of the neuro-surgeons who favor the extensive use of prefrontal lobotomy have undoubtedly considered themselves, in all sincerity, to be benefactors of humanity. Their years of training have been spent, in part, with the ideal of service in their minds. Yet now, confronted by the opportunity to "play God" in respect to neurotically unbalanced patients, they have to ask themselves a great many fundamental, even metaphysical, questions. As Mr. Wallace reports:

> There are those who feel the operation tampers with the God substance, who feel that if it cuts out a man's cares, it also cuts out his soul and his conscience.

"Caution Recommended"

Even among the most radical supporters of prefrontal lobotomy there is recognition of the seriousness of the step. Dr. Walter Freeman and Dr. James Watts of George Washington University write:

> Prefrontal lobotomy is an operation of last resort. It should be performed only on those patients who no longer have a reasonable hope of spontaneous recovery. It should be done only in cases of threatened disability or suicide, and only after conservative measures have failed. It should be done with the full appreciation of the changes in personality that will inevitably be brought about.

SOUL-LESS MEN?

These same specialists, however, continue to recommend the operation for the near-insane on the ground that patients subsequently are freed of their tensions, find "life particularly agreeable to them and they enjoy it to the fullest." A brief summary of the disadvantages is given by Mr. Wallace:

> There is the school of thought that can prove, also with facts, that prefrontal lobotomy converts patients into docile, inert, often useless drones, stripping them of their old powers, giving them convulsive seizures, making them indifferent to social amenities, filling them with aggressive misbehavior and impairing their foresight and insight.

CASE HISTORY

Having provided this background for the information of the reader, Mr. Wallace proceeds to discuss the life story of a Princeton Phi Beta Kappa whose acute melancholia reached such alarming proportions that his wife and brother agreed to the "last resort" operation. Fearing that he would kill himself in one of his states of depression, they reasoned that "anything would be better."

The patient upon whom the lobotomy was performed is no longer tense or worried; he eats well, sleeps well and apparently "enjoys life" adequately. *But he is no longer the same person.* The entire character and personality have been altered—so much so, that his devoted wife, who endured with fortitude the most harrowing of experiences before the operation was performed, finally left her altered husband. Perhaps she felt that the same ego was no longer truly present, no longer able to awaken in her a sense of obligation to former karmic ties?

"WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE?"

Mr. Wallace pictures the brother, often lying awake at night in the house which sheltered his soundly sleeping brother after the operation, trying to decide whether or not he had done the right thing. His brother *had* been brilliant but was now dull and insensitive. Yet he had once been under tremendous strain, and was now free from it. "What would you have done?" the brother asks. If these operations continue, thousands more will be asking the same question.

Theosophical Suggestion

Whatever the mechanics of prefrontal lobotomy, it is clear that from the standpoint of theosophical teaching this incisive interference with brain structure destroys the normal channel of communication for the Higher Ego. At rare times the person's "brilliance" or "intensity" returns, but with no stability or continuity. The Ego, we might think, hovers near, but is unable to assume control, and hence is also unable to exhaust the karmic experience of a lifetime. Here we must pause to consider the significance of acute mental illness, particularly of the sort held to be "curable" by lobotomy. It would certainly be a logical supposition to think that the near-insane person, already suffering from faulty integration of the soul and psychic nature, loses, after lobotomy has been performed, his only opportunity for regaining control. The speculation indulged by Dr. Lubin, as reported in Lookout for last month, is pertinent here, for he intimated that brain operations could *not* cure insanity unless the power of self-cure remained in the patient; or, in other words, unless the patient would get well eventually in any case. If we extend our time-scale to include a series of lifetimes, Dr. Lubin's thought may be regarded as a deep intuition.

Quite possibly, then, on the theosophic view, radical lobotomy *destroys the opportunity for regaining full sanity, in this life,* and may weaken the patient's psychic resilience in lives to come.

The Point of No Return

This whole area of discussion indeed represents a crossroads for surgical medicine. Sincerely motivated science has, so to speak, come to the point of no return. Neuro-surgeons must now determine, finally, how deep are their own materialistic beliefs. From a one-life, no-soul basis, lobotomy for extreme cases seems medically "indicated"; from any other basis, it may be considered a serious crime against the soul, and it is gratifying to see that many of the serious implications of lobotomy are being examined with grave concern.

"The Housing of Psyche"

This intriguing title is given literal meaning by an article appearing in the July, 1951 issue of *Mental Hygiene.* N. J. Demerath, a research professor at the University of North Carolina, discusses both

psychic and physical health in relation to the extensive housing projects undertaken by Federal authorities. Dr. Demerath remarks:

> In housing practice and in research on housing, we have been preoccupied with physical attributes, and the provision of "safe, sanitary, and decent" dwellings crudely and materialistically conceived. Our standards reflect this preoccupation.

Lack of Standards

> But what of housing in its social-psychological dimensions? Here we most certainly need standards based on verifiable knowledge of the relationships between specifiable attributes of housing and mental health. We have no such standards today. For that matter, the standards we do have may in some instances be worse than none, for a physical slum is not necessarily a social-psychological slum.
>
> Physically substandard building may well house socially and psychologically superior communities. And the emotional rewards of close-knit, primary group life in the physical slum may more than offset its structural and sanitary inadequacies. How many socially rich communities have been destroyed in the course of urban development and slum clearance, never to be replaced, we have no way of knowing. We have no standards by which we can distinguish areas of good and bad mental health, social-psychological superiority and inferiority. Yet if we are not to wreck more than we build, if we are to make housing better serve the public interest, whether we be health officers, planners, or housers, we can no longer neglect mental-health matters.

Another Scientific Crossroads

Dr. Demerath's article may, we think, be correlated with the fact that a host of new considerations in respect to the essential nature of man are being currently faced by brain surgeons, while debating the merits and demerits of lobotomy. Science, we say, has inspired a mechanistic technology. And, as anyone is willing to grant, technologies have a habit of running away with themselves and the men they should be serving. The faith that mechanical changes in the human body will produce "better people" or cure psychic illness is the same faith as that reflected by others who assume that better housing and better sanitation will rid us of our personal and social ills. Dr. Demerath indicates that he is another of those perceptive men who have risen above conventional scientific bias:

> We may look for housing standards predicated on a more rounded scientific understanding of the relationships between houses and persons, in social and psychological as well as in biological terms.
>
> If public health be more than the provision of sanitary privies, water, air, and light, public health workers may well look to the proper housing of psyche alongside of soma. And in the pursuit of this objective, all of us can join forces—planners, housers, health specialists, engineers, sociologists, and psychologists.

Birth Control Condemned

A UP dispatch (Oct. 29) from Castel Gandolfo, Italy, reports the unconditional and detailed declaration of Pope Pius XII against "all forms of birth control, natural or artificial, including the so-called 'rhythmic cycle'." A certain amount of consternation among Catholics may result from this, since it is common knowledge that the "rhythm cycle" has been countenanced in many dioceses, literature on "natural birth control" being sometimes suggested by priests, with the implication that God and the Church will be less affronted by this means of avoiding conception.

The Will Against Maternity

Theosophists will perhaps feel some sympathy for the Pope's unpopular but forthright statement, part of which runs as follows:

> Any attempt which has the aim of impeding procreation is immoral. Today the great problem is presenting itself whether maternity can be reconciled with the ever-more diffused use of the natural sterility period (the so-called 'agenesis' periods of women) which seem to be used as a clear expression of the will against maternity.

The limitations of the Pope's position, however, from a philosophical point of view, are numerous. As is true throughout the whole Catholic tradition, no differences in degree of moral responsibility are taken into account, nor any differences in motivation. The Theosophical teachings focus above all on the fact that moral responsibility *is* different in degree among men, rather than being the same, which would indicate that the karmic consequences of birth control practices must depend largely on factors not even mentioned by Pope Pius. All wrongful uses of man's physical instruments are inspired

far more by wrong attitude and lack of responsibility than by "bodily appetites."

Some Fine Distinctions

In a footnote appended to a discussion of lunar influences, H.P.B. once wrote a few guarded sentences, illuminating two sides of the question so summarily settled by the Pope:

> If instead of being taught in Sunday Schools useless lessons from the Bible, the armies of the ragged and the poor were taught Astrology—so far, at any rate, as the occult properties of the Moon and its hidden influences on generation are concerned, then there would be little need to fear increase of the population nor to resort to the questionable literature of the Malthusians for its arrest. For it is the Moon and her conjunctions that regulate conceptions, and every astrologer in India knows it. During the previous and the present races, at least at the beginning of this one, those who indulged in marital relations during certain lunar phases that made those relations sterile were regarded as sorcerers and sinners. But even now those sins of old, based on the Occult knowledge and the abuse of it, would appear preferable to the crimes of today, which are perpetuated because of the complete ignorance, of, and disbelief in all such occult influences. (*S.D.* I, 228-29 fn.)

Con and Pro

The Pope's ban may well be a step backward for many Catholics. Previous encouragement of "rhythmic cycle" study had brought some attention to bear upon the mysterious, marvelous forces and laws which are at work in the human body. H.P.B. calls these, "occult influences," and clearly states that something may always be gained from awareness of their existence. Some may regard the Pope's proclamation as standing for a conviction against compromise with the highest morality. Others will see in it provision for increased power of the Church.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty for the orthodox stems from the fact that Christian theology has never invited philosophic thought. The way of authoritative dogma never improves the morality of humankind, but can lead only to the creation of newer dogmas.

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Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

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